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New York

President:	Mr. Wu Haitao	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Ms. Cordova Soria
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Moriko
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Elé Ela
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Almunayekh
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Mr. Lewicki
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/1028)

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Burundi

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi (S/2018/1028)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Burundi to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/1028, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi.

I now give the floor to Mr. Kafando.

Mr. Kafando (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Sir, on your presidency of the Security Council for this month, and to assure you of my full support.

The report that I have the honour of introducing on behalf of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1028) provides a review of the situation in Burundi, as well as my and my team's activities during the period from 10 August to 30 October. In the report's political sections, the Secretary-General takes stock of the tensions that are affecting the political stakeholders, and primarily the relations between the Government and the opposition. In particular, the report discusses the lack of trust and dialogue between the authorities and the opposition parties, which are nevertheless acknowledged to be essential to resolving the ongoing crisis. Since the publication of the report, the political situation on the domestic front has been dominated by four major events.

The first is that the Minister of the Interior, alleging the violation of certain provisions of the law by political parties, rejected a request by Agathon Rwasa, the leader of the opposition coalition, for the registration of the Front national de liberté/Amizero y'Abarundi party. The second was the appeal on 9 November to the African Union and the United Nations by the platform of the Conseil national pour le respect de l'Accord d'Arusha pour la paix et la réconciliation au Burundi et la restauration de l'état de droit opposition party asking them to take charge of the inter-Burundian dialogue process, partly to prevent any resort to the use of weapons, which has been advocated by some members of the opposition. The third was the European Union's renewal until October 2019 of its restrictive measures against a number of Burundian officials and officers for what are described as serious violations of human rights, as well as the obstruction of democracy and efforts to achieve peace. The last was the National Assembly of Burundi's renewal until 2022 of the mandate of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the principal aim of examining acts of violence committed between 1885 and 2008.

More fundamentally, the political situation has been largely dominated in the past few weeks by the holding of the fifth inter-Burundian dialogue session, unfortunately without the participation of the Government and the majority party and its allies. For various reasons, the participants adopted their own road map, thereby de facto rejecting that of the Government, adopted in August, particularly because of the lack of any prior consultations on it. Based on a synthesis of the various proposals, the facilitator and former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, submitted to the mediator a final report on the dialogue process that he had conducted. I would like to take this opportunity to once again pay tribute on behalf of the Secretary-General to the facilitator and mediator for their tireless commitment, despite the fact that it has not yet resulted in the conclusion of an agreement between the parties involved.

The security situation in Burundi remained relatively calm during the period covered by the report. At the beginning of this month, however, the media reported deadly fighting in Uvira, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, between Burundi's national defence forces and the Résistance pour un état de droit au Burundi-Tabara, an armed rebel group. Those

incidents, which were confirmed by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, have resulted in several deaths.

The Secretary-General notes in his report that the human rights situation in Burundi remains a matter of concern, pointing out that the Government has still not resumed its cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. Violations of human rights and other abuses, such as arbitrary arrests, forced disappearances and other acts of intimidation, continue to persist, as does hate speech, especially against opposition actors. The democratic space continues to be constrained, except for some parties allied to the Government. With regard to the latest report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (A/HRC/39/63), the Secretary-General deplores the unacceptable remarks made by the representatives of the Burundian Government about the report and its authors.

The humanitarian situation remains worrying. An estimated 1.7 million people are threatened by food insecurity. I would also like to reiterate the Secretary-General's concerns about the ongoing deterioration of the country's socioeconomic situation and the food insecurity that is affecting many Burundians. The Secretary-General welcomes the steps that the Government and various international non-governmental organizations have taken to relaunch their cooperation, and we continue to encourage the Government to be flexible in that regard in order to ensure the welfare of its most vulnerable populations.

Between January and October nearly 52,260 refugees returned to Burundi under the voluntary repatriation programme, particularly from Tanzania. There are still just over 380,000 Burundians in the region, 227,510 of them in Tanzania. In that regard, the Secretary-General encourages the Government to continue collaborating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to ensure their voluntary repatriation and dignified return, and their reintegration into their communities of origin or host communities.

In sum, the Secretary-General's report shows that the situation in Burundi remains fragile, partly because of the lack of an inclusive political dialogue, but also owing to its humanitarian, economic and financial problems and to security threats. After more than three years of tireless efforts through the inter-Burundian dialogue process, the United Nations, the African Union, the subregion and Burundi's partners must reassess the ways and means to help Burundi emerge from its current political crisis, and that assessment should naturally be initiated first and foremost by the Burundians themselves and then by the region. The Secretary-General welcomes the East African Community's forthcoming summit and fervently hopes that it will address the issue of Burundi. Based on that meeting's conclusions, and especially on its recommendations, the East African Community, the United Nations and the African Union must re-evaluate their commitment to helping Burundi emerge definitively from its crisis, especially in view of the elections scheduled for 2020.

I would like to thank the Burundian authorities for the consideration shown to my Office and me, and to the United Nations family in Burundi in general.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Kafando for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Lauber.

Mr. Lauber (Switzerland): I have the honour to inform the Council today about my recent visit to Burundi, which I undertook in my capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) from 5 to 9 November. As per established practice, for this statement I have consulted with and received the approval of the 54 members of the PBC configuration, including Burundi, the country concerned. Based on those consultations, I focused on the following issues during my visit: socioeconomic cooperation on the new national development plan, the political situation in the aftermath of the fifth round of the dialogue led by the East African Community (EAC), the path to the elections in 2020 and the return of refugees.

In Burundi, I met with the Second Vice-President of the Republic, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Finance, Budget and Privatization and the President of the National Assembly, as well as former President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, Mr. Evariste Ndayishimiye, Secretary-General of the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie ruling party, and representatives of the Sahwanya-Front pour la démocratie du Burundi and Amizero y'Abarundi opposition parties. I also met with His Excellency Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the United Nations, Mr. Basile Ikouebe, Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region, and with

representatives of the private sector and civil society, as well as numerous bilateral and multilateral donors and, of course, the United Nations country team. Owing to a last-minute change in his schedule, the meeting with President Pierre Nkurunziza did not take place. From Bujumbura, I travelled to Pretoria for meetings on 8 and 9 November with representatives of the Government of South Africa and several think tanks. I would like to take this opportunity to thank United Nations Resident Coordinator Garry Conille and Ambassador Albert Shingiro, Permanent Representative of Burundi, for the rich and insightful programme that they helped organize.

During my stay in Bujumbura some of my interlocutors informed me that the security situation in the country remains calm and stable, and we encourage all stakeholders to refrain from violence in order to safeguard that state of affairs. President Nkurunziza's announcement that he would not seek re-election in 2020 was one of the most significant developments since my last trip to Burundi in March. When I met with some of the leaders of the ruling party during my visit, they confirmed the President's intention, and some expressed the hope that the announcement would help to ease the tensions among political actors ahead of the 2020 elections.

When Burundi's Foreign Minister Nibigira met the Secretary-General in late September in New York, he raised the question of United Nations support for the Burundian elections of 2020, and I brought up that conversation when Mr. Nibigira received me in Bujumbura. He emphasized that preparations for the elections were already ongoing and indicated that the international community could play a role in encouraging those members of the opposition in exile who were not involved in the coup attempt of May 2015 to return home and participate in the elections. He mentioned that in Kayanza in August the leaders of some political parties had agreed on a road map for the elections. The representatives of some opposition parties and various civil-society actors reminded me, however, that not all the political parties had subscribed to the Kayanza road map, and expressed concern that the elections of 2020 would not be inclusive, as well as their hope that the national independent electoral commission will be truly impartial. Many interlocutors lamented the fact that the Government had not participated in the fifth and last round of the EAC-led talks in Arusha in late October, while the Government, the ruling party and some other political parties justified their absence based on the fact that October is a month of national mourning when Burundi commemorates the anniversary of the assassinations of Prince Louis Rwagasore, the father of Burundian independence, and Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's first democratically elected President.

My recent visit also offered the opportunity to pursue the dialogue on the socioeconomic situation with the Government and Burundi's international partners that I initiated two years ago with the then-United Nations Resident Coordinator. On 22 August, the Government launched a new national development plan for the period from 2018 to 2027. Its objective is to transform Burundi's economy structurally in order to achieve "strong, sustainable, resilient and inclusive growth capable of creating decent employment for all and improving social well-being". Over the next 10 years, that plan will be a key reference document for Burundi's development partners. I therefore encourage the Government and donors to use it as an entry point for a substantive discussion on development cooperation, and specifically on the implementation of the national development plan.

On 6 November, the Government organized a presentation and round-table discussion on the new development plan between its authors, the Resident Coordinator and myself and our teams. I also held two separate meetings on the plan with bilateral and multilateral donors, who expressed their readiness to support it and reiterated their commitment to remaining engaged in Burundi. At the same time, they emphasized their desire to have a substantive dialogue with the Government on the plan's implementation and on its expectations of donors. They expressed a desire to engage more intensively with the Government with regard to the sectoral implementation of the plan, both strategically and on a more technical level. They remain interested in participating in a joint retreat or workshop with the Government focusing on the main objectives of the plan and on opportunities for support. The Government informed me that it is currently preparing a road map for the plan's implementation and will reach out to donors in that regard.

The recent suspension of the work of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Burundi was a major subject of many conversations. Government representatives informed me that about 25 international NGOs had already adapted to the new regulations and will be able to resume their work soon, while

the relevant authorities are currently considering the requests of another 60 organizations, which should be able to resume their operations shortly. Progress has been made on funding the humanitarian response plan, which is currently covered to a level of 58 per cent, compared to just 2 per cent during my visit in March.

Representatives of the Government and the Heads of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) drew my attention once again to the issue of the return of refugees, mainly from Tanzania, which is taking place on the basis of a tripartite agreement between Burundi, Tanzania and UNHCR. More than 52,000 refugees have been helped by UNHCR and partners to voluntarily repatriate to Burundi since August 2017, the vast majority of them from Tanzania but with some also returning from Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government noted that assistance aimed at supporting the return and reintegration of refugees was particularly welcome. The international partners of UNHCR and Burundi stressed that the voluntary nature of the returns is essential. In cooperation with Burundi's authorities, UNHCR — together with partner organizations such as the IOM, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Food Programme, UNICEF, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund and the International Rescue Committee — is offering assistance to people who decide to return to Burundi, taking into account the needs of both the returnees and their communities of origin. Although various actors, including the Peacebuilding Fund, are financing international assistance for returns, the programme remains severely underfunded. Among the challenges people are facing are food insecurity, difficulties with enrolment in schools and a lack of means for rehabilitating shelters.

I also met with the new Head of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Bujumbura, who reported allegations of continuing human rights violations and abuses. In my meetings with Government officials, I urged them to conclude the outstanding memorandum of understanding with OHCHR as soon as possible and to engage with the Office and other parts of the United Nations country team on the entire range of human rights, civil and political as well as social, economic and cultural. Based on all my recent conversations, these are my conclusions and recommendations.

First, the 2020 elections are already very much at the centre of political attention in Burundi. It is crucial to the country's future to ensure that they are free, inclusive, democratic and peaceful and that their results are widely seen to be legitimate, primarily in Burundi itself but also internationally. I encourage the Government of Burundi and its international partners to pursue their discussions about possible forms of assistance that the country may need in order to ensure the conduct of successful elections.

Secondly, the upcoming elections should not distract from the fact that the country's socioeconomic development still requires more attention and additional efforts. Burundi's international partners in Bujumbura unanimously welcomed the fact that the Government had issued a new national development plan, which has the potential to contribute to the well-being of the people of Burundi and enable increased cooperation between the Government and its international partners. I encourage the Government and its partners to engage in open and substantive strategic dialogue on the plan's implementation, followed by sector-specific discussions on concrete projects. I also encourage bilateral and multilateral partners and the Government of Burundi to continue their dialogue with a view to creating conditions conducive to the resumption of assistance that has been suspended.

Thirdly, the orderly and voluntary return of Burundian refugees is another element that can contribute to inclusive and therefore successful elections. UNHCR and its partners offer crucial assistance for the voluntary return of refugees by ensuring respect for international standards and thereby enabling the sustainable reintegration of returnees. They require additional resources, accompaniment and support from the international community for those efforts.

Fourthly and finally, I encourage the Government and its partners at the United Nations to work in a constructive and practical manner, based on mutual trust and respect, towards the full realization of all human rights — civil and political as well as social, economic and cultural — and to swiftly conclude the outstanding memorandum of understanding between the Government of Burundi and OHCHR. The Peacebuilding Commission Burundi configuration remains committed to facilitating the dialogue between

the Government of Burundi and its international partners on all the issues I have mentioned, as they are all essential to peacebuilding. Meanwhile, the configuration's focus will remain on the socioeconomic arena. A more comprehensive report on my latest visit will be presented to the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on Monday 26 November.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the members of the Security Council for their continuing support to the configuration and for their interest.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Lauber for his briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank President Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their important briefings and for their commitment. On behalf of France, I would like to make three main points.

I would first like to express our concerns about various developments in Burundi in recent months. Secondly, I want to call on the Burundian authorities to take appropriate measures to enable free and peaceful elections to be held in 2020. And thirdly, in this context, I want to support the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Security Council remain seized of this matter, in the understanding that we should reflect collectively on the best way for the international community to help Burundi emerge from this crisis.

My first point is about the latest developments in Burundi. We would like to once again welcome President Nkurunziza's announcement that he will not stand for re-election in 2020 and will support the next President to be elected. That positive gesture could contribute to finding a peaceful way out of the crisis. However, that does not diminish the fact that the recent situation presents real concerns, as the Secretary-General has described. The fact that the Burundian authorities did not participate in the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue held in Arusha at the end of October is particularly regrettable. The announcement that foreign non-governmental organizations in the country were being suspended for three months has also given rise to doubts. It is part of a general context of deterioration, as the international Commission of Inquiry has highlighted, concluding that there have been serious human rights violations and that the space in which civil society can act is constrained. The Secretary-General's latest report (S/2018/1028) also points out those serious human rights violations. In particular, we are concerned about the growing role played by certain elements of the Imbonerakure, the youth movement of the ruling party. And we deplore the threats, intimidation and personal attacks against the members of the Commission of Inquiry.

We are also worried about aspects of the humanitarian situation, such as the 3.6 million Burundians in need and the plight of displaced persons and refugees. While a number of people have returned, we reiterate how important it is that they do so voluntarily, safely and with dignity, in accordance with the principles of international humanitarian law.

My second point is that we are extending a hand to the Burundian authorities in asking them to move forward. We should now all focus on the 2020 elections, which must be free, fair and transparent. Now is the time for the Burundian Government to change its trajectory and make a return to stability possible. In that regard, we encourage it to resume the inter-Burundian political dialogue. We also ask it to ensure that all political parties have fair and equitable access to the 2020 elections. The priority right now is creating the conditions for free, fair and truly inclusive elections that respect the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. In that regard it will be crucial to ensure women's participation in the whole process. We also call for respect for fundamental freedoms, particularly freedom of opinion and expression, which will help to restore the Burundian people's trust in their institutions generally. That is essential to an open, peaceful society and long-term stability. In the same spirit, we call on the Burundian authorities to cooperate fully with the independent mechanisms of the Human Rights Council and with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. We want to see them act neutrally and impartially in investigating and prosecuting cases of human rights violations, whoever the perpetrators may be.

My third point concerns how the international community should help Burundi emerge from its crisis. France shares the Secretary-General's view that we must work closely with the East African Community and the African Union to help Burundi hold fair, free

and transparent elections in 2020. Like the Secretary-General, we believe that this issue should remain on the Security Council's agenda. Human rights violations and the importance of the 2020 elections demand special attention on the part of the Council, because the stability of both the country and the region depends on it. We will follow very closely what the Heads of State and Government of the East African Community say at their important meeting at the end of the month, just as we will of course listen with great interest to the recommendations of the facilitator, President Mkapa. Lastly, I would like to reiterate France's support for the facilitation led by the East African Community, as well as the efforts of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, whom I would like to thank once again.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Special Envoy Michel Kafando for his briefing on the evolving situation in Burundi. We listened with grateful interest to the report by Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Sweden, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi country configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), following his trip to Bujumbura and other countries of the region. We commend the configuration's balanced approach, which has enabled it to remain a valuable channel for dialogue with Bujumbura, and we support the PBC's efforts to revitalize its interaction with the Burundians by focusing on issues related to socioeconomic development and the re-establishment of donor confidence.

We believe that overall, Burundi's internal political processes are trending towards stabilization. With regard to the country's political situation, we want to point out that on 17 May it held a peaceful, constitutional referendum. In response to the criticism of that event from the opposition and a number of Western States, the voter turnout was a staggering — indeed unprecedented for an African country — total of 96.24 per cent, of which an overwhelming majority of 73.26 per cent also voted for constitutional change. We also understand that it was preceded by a democratic and transparent publicity campaign.

In the view of the Russian Federation, the issue of the presidential and parliamentary elections planned for 2020 is Burundi's internal affair. We call on the authorities and the opposition to refrain from negative rhetoric and to concentrate on preparing for the election cycle, especially since President Nkurunziza has announced that he will not be participating in the presidential race.

With regard to the problems in advancing the inter-Burundian dialogue, we want to point out that ascribing responsibility for it to one side alone is counterproductive and even dangerous. Rather than shielding the intransigent opposition, it would behove the Secretariat and a number of our Western colleagues to urge all the Burundian parties to work to resume a full-scale negotiation process, which could lead to the achievement of sustainable peace and stability in Burundi, as soon as possible.

In the light of the intention of former President Benjamin Mkapa of Tanzania to consider rethinking his role in the mediation process, we would like to note that this does not cancel our commitment to the principle of African solutions to African problems. We call on the African community to continue its active mediation efforts aimed at facilitating constructive negotiations between the parties.

The fact that the process of the return of refugees from neighbouring countries to Burundi has begun is evidence of the gradual improvement in the country's situation. At the same time, the humanitarian situation in Burundi remains problematic. It is regrettable that the humanitarian appeal for support to the country has not been fully funded. We urge donor countries to abandon their double standards. We continue to stand firmly for the principles of humanism, neutrality and impartiality in United Nations efforts to deliver humanitarian assistance with the consent of the host country.

We have taken note of the information in the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/1028) on the alleged major human rights violations in Burundi. We should point out, however, that the information in the September report (A/HRC/39/63) of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), from which it is borrowed, is far from unambiguous, and we should therefore draw no specific conclusions from it. It should be sufficient to point out that the OHCHR report is based on data that comes only from representatives of the radical opposition, which has been an unrelenting critic of the Burundian authorities for a number of years and also conducts its activities from outside the country. That can hardly be considered an impartial source of information. In any case, as we all know, in accordance with the division of labour in the United Nations, human rights issues are dealt with by the Human Rights Council, where Burundi is already the subject of discussion. We want to point out that the entire responsibility for ensuring that human rights

are upheld in the territory of Burundi, including by armed and non-State entities, belongs to the Burundian authorities, and needless to say the Security Council should proceed from that understanding in its work. As a matter of principle, we support respect for Burundi's sovereignty and categorically reject any interference in Bujumbura's internal affairs.

In general, we would like to emphasize that the information we have heard today is not evidence of the kind of problems in Burundi that would merit keeping the situation there on the Security Council's agenda. We once again urge our colleagues on the Council to focus on more serious issues. In any case, we certainly do not see the need for quarterly discussions on the situation in Burundi. In general, we believe that the Council's ongoing focus on Burundi is becoming counterproductive and is essentially merely a convenient excuse for the unreconcilable opposition to complicate its internal political processes.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): Bolivia thanks Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

Bolivia appreciates the efforts by the Special Envoy to continue the inter-Burundian dialogue in an inclusive atmosphere. With respect to the fifth dialogue session in particular, we hope its subsequent road map and final report will provide a basis for reflection on the way forward. We also appreciate the respective efforts of the facilitator and the mediator, former President Benjamin Mkapa of the United Republic of Tanzania and President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda. We acknowledge the work of the East African Community, which should continue to lead the inter-Burundian dialogue process in order to preserve the progress made under the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. We also appreciate the work being done in Burundi by the Special Representative of the African Union for the Great Lakes Region, the United Nations country team and, especially, the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, whom we commend for his efforts in organizing and facilitating dialogue on socioeconomic issues between the Government and its international partners.

We are pleased that the security situation in the country continues to improve and that the referendum of 17 May was held in an atmosphere of calm and inclusion, without major incidents and with the participation of all political parties. We also welcome the appointment of new members to the national independent electoral commission, as well as the Burundian Government's adoption of a road map for the upcoming elections. We encourage all the parties to work to create the conditions necessary for an atmosphere of peace and trust during the upcoming 2020 elections by reinforcing a spirit of tolerance, taking conciliatory measures and maintaining a dialogue process with the opposition.

We commend Burundi's launch of its national development plan and call on all its partners to work together with the Government to forge links that will enable its implementation for the benefit of the Burundian people. We also note Burundi's contribution to peace and security through its deployment of troop contingents, a testament to its institutional capacity. The international community should support Burundi in strengthening that capacity, which goes hand in hand with its socioeconomic development and its ability to address its persistent humanitarian challenges. We encourage the international community to continue to provide funding for the humanitarian response plan in Burundi, and we are pleased that 52 per cent of the required amount has been achieved so far.

We highlight the voluntary return home of more than 52,000 refugees and encourage the Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations entities to continue working for the voluntary, safe and dignified return of the hundreds of thousands of refugees who remain in neighbouring countries. We call on the international community to support those efforts and in particular to provide assistance for the refugees' return and reintegration.

If these challenges are to be overcome, we need to create an atmosphere of trust, which involves lifting the unilateral sanctions on Burundi in accordance with the appeal by the Heads of State of the African Union at its July summit. The situation in Burundi has harmful consequences for the civilian population, especially vulnerable groups, and negative effects on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In conclusion, I believe that the Security Council and the international community in general should

pursue a dialogue in a constructive manner and deal with the areas where there is still a lack of convergence for the sake of a peaceful solution based on respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Burundi.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): (*spoke in French*): The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to thank Special Envoy Michel Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber for their informed advice on the situation in Burundi. We thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2018/1028) and welcome his announcement that he will present the Council with a set of options on the role of the United Nations in Burundi. I would like to focus on three points — first, the inter-Burundian dialogue; secondly, the security situation, the socioeconomic context and human rights; and thirdly, the way forward.

My first point concerns the progress of the inter-Burundian dialogue. The Kingdom of the Netherlands expresses its support for the East African Community facilitator, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, and congratulates him on his tireless efforts to promote an inclusive and acceptable inter-Burundian dialogue. Despite his efforts, the outcome of the fifth inter-Burundian dialogue session, held from 25 to 29 October, was disappointing. We agree with the facilitator that it is regrettable that the Burundian Government did not take part in the dialogue and that as a result, many disagreements persist. It is also clear that there is still no road map for the 2020 elections. Important issues such as the return of the opposition diaspora and the protection of the achievements of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement are still outstanding.

That brings me to my second point. The Netherlands remains concerned about security, the socioeconomic context and the human rights situation in Burundi. While the overall security situation has improved, a climate of repression continues to compromise the calmer situation. The most recent report of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi (A/HRC/39/63) indicates that there have been disappearances, torture and arbitrary arrests. It also notes that the main perpetrators of those acts are Government actors or their proxies, such as the national security services, the police and the Imbonerakure militia. Those abuses must stop immediately and must not go unpunished. In addition, many Burundians are dealing with a difficult socioeconomic situation. Approximately 1.7 million people are food insecure and 378,000 Burundian refugees are still living outside the country. In that context, international aid is vital. We welcome the leadership of Ambassador Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, in continuing to monitor the issue. It is also essential that Burundi's partners be able to continue to provide their support.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains firmly committed as a development partner of Burundi. The door to dialogue remains open to resolve misunderstandings and to restore mutual trust. Dialogue must also be the answer to the sudden suspension of international non-governmental organizations, which is a serious setback to the country's development activities.

My last point is on the way forward. Today, the Council is considering the situation in Burundi for the fifth time this year. There are encouraging signs, particularly the announcement that President Nkurunziza will not seek a new term. However, there is insufficient progress on the most consensus-based points most consistently highlighted by the Security Council both in its presidential statement in April (S/PRST/2018/7) and in its press statement in August (SC/13461), namely, first, the need for an active and unconditional commitment to dialogue conducted under the auspices of the East African Community (EAC); secondly, reaching an agreement among the stakeholders before the 2020 elections; and thirdly, the necessary resumption of cooperation between Burundi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations Special Envoy and the African Union observers. At present, such issues are still pending.

The ordinary summit of the East African Community will assess the situation in Burundi at the end of the month, while time is running out and the time frame between now and 2020 narrows. The leaders of the region will have to rise to the challenge and bring the political process out of the impasse in which it has become embroiled. They have a key role to play in determining the future stability of Burundi and the region as a whole. The Kingdom of the Netherlands looks to the EAC for leadership and guidance on the way forward to continue the dialogue. We therefore welcome the offer by Mr. Benjamin Mkapa to brief the Council following the EAC summit, as stated in his letter of 9 November.

We call on the African Union, the United Nations and the guarantors of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement to actively support the pursuit of a political solution. Inclusive dialogue remains the only sustainable way to build the necessary confidence for free, fair and peaceful elections in 2020.

In conclusion, I would like to echo the words of Mr. Benjamin Mkapa — the Council must remain seized of this matter.

Mr. Lewicki (Poland): At the outset, I would like to thank Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for their very important and comprehensive briefings. Let me also to take this opportunity to express Poland's full support for all the efforts of the Special Envoy, Mr. Kafando, and the PBC's Burundi configuration, under the able stewardship of Ambassador Lauber, to ensure peace, stability and development in Burundi. Allow me to focus on three key issues, namely, the political process, human rights and the economic and humanitarian situation.

First, on the political process, Poland commends all the efforts made by the East African Community and the facilitator, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, to enable the intra-Burundian dialogue. We deeply regret that the Burundian Government did not take the opportunity to make progress on national reconciliation and decided not to attend the fifth round of negotiations. It goes without saying that only an inclusive political process can ensure a sustainable and widely acceptable solution.

It is high time for the Government to prove its readiness for a political compromise and engage in a real dialogue with a wider spectrum of the opposition. It is especially important now with the presidential elections approaching in 2020, as it is the role of the authorities to ensure that the electoral process is free, fair, transparent and truly inclusive.

Secondly, on human rights, let me stress that, in our view, the issue of human rights lies fully within the mandate of the Security Council, in line with the Charter of the United Nations. One cannot speak about peace and security if one omits human rights and development. Poland remains seriously concerned about the reports of political violence and persistent serious human rights violations and abuses in Burundi. We are particularly worried about the reported cases of intimidation of members of the opposition, as well as limitations on political space, an independent media, civil society and non-governmental organizations.

Against that background, we urge the Burundi authorities to improve good governance, open up the civic and democratic space and ensure media freedom ahead of the elections scheduled for 2020. Following the statement made by Ambassador Lauber, we would like to appeal to the Government of Burundi to swiftly conclude the memorandum of understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. We also call on the authorities of Burundi to fully cooperate and to engage constructively with the independent Commission of Inquiry on Burundi, established by the Human Rights Council, as well as with other mechanisms of the Human Rights Council, such as special rapporteurs.

Thirdly, on the economic and humanitarian situation, the ongoing political impasse has a negative impact on the economy and the humanitarian situation. We welcome the continuation of the process of voluntary repatriation of refugees under the tripartite agreement with Tanzania and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. However, further efforts to create an environment conducive to the return and reintegration of refugees into society are necessary. Poland also commends the launching of the national development plan for Burundi, which can contribute to the socioeconomic development of the country. At the same time, we praise the efforts made by the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission in that regard.

In conclusion, Poland still believes that the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement remains the main instrument for peace and stability in Burundi and in the Great Lakes region as a whole. The country continuously requires the special attention of the Security Council and the international community. We therefore encourage the African Union, the East African Community and, especially, the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement to remain engaged in supporting Burundi in order to find a sustainable political solution ahead of the presidential elections and to overcome the causes generating instability in that part of the continent.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank Special Envoy Michael Kafando for his briefing on the current political situation in Burundi. We are also grateful to Ambassador Jürg Lauber for his briefing on the socioeconomic cooperation between the Government

of Burundi and its international partners. We have been closely following the political developments in Burundi and we are very much encouraged by the continued stable security situation in the country.

Following the statement made by President Pierre Nkurunziza of Burundi on 7 June, we were very hopeful that the next step would be the relaunching of the East African Community (EAC)-led Inter-Burundian dialogue, with the participation of all stakeholders, to settle the political impasse in the country. We share the concern raised by the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1028) about the lack of progress on the inter-Burundian dialogue, which was expected to be launched from 24 to 29 October.

As we have repeatedly stated, the political impasse in Burundi can be addressed only through peaceful, inclusive and consensual dialogue. Hence, the decision on the future of the intra-Burundian dialogue, which has been facilitated by the EAC with the support of the African Union and the United Nations, on the basis of the spirit of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and the constitution of Burundi, remains critical in light of the fast-approaching national elections in Burundi in 2020. In that regard, it is important that there be engagement between the Government of Burundi and the international community based on a realistic strategy aimed at supporting strong institutions and creating a climate that is conducive to the conduct of peaceful and credible elections and the consolidation of recent gains, without backsliding into the violence of the past. All Burundian parties need to demonstrate a spirit of compromise in order to ensure lasting peace and stability beyond 2020. On the part of the Government of Burundi, it is important to have an open-minded engagement with the international community, explaining the plan to create an environment conducive to the conduct of free and fair elections in 2020 as well as the commitment to the spirit of the Arusha Agreement.

The Council should explore new avenues for re-engagement with Burundi. It is time that the Secretary-General be fully engaged in cooperation with the East African Community and the African Union. In that regard, we take note of the Secretary-General's call for a thorough discussion in order to examine the political process so far, learn the lessons and chart the way forward. We expect that the East African Community will take the lead on this and come up with creative yet workable solutions.

Finally, while we welcome and encourage the work of the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission in serving as a bridge for dialogue between Burundi and the international community, we request the international community to do more to alleviate the socioeconomic difficulties and to address the humanitarian situations of the people of Burundi.

Mr. Moriko (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for the quality of his briefing. We also thank Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Permanent Representative of Switzerland and Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his briefing on the changing socioeconomic situation in Burundi.

My country welcomes all the efforts made by the facilitator to guarantee the inclusiveness of the inter-Burundian political dialogue. However, it notes with regret the absence of the Government of Burundi and some political actors at the fifth session of the talks, which was held from 24 to 29 October in Arusha, Tanzania. My delegation therefore urges all stakeholders to retake their place in the political process and to create the conditions for a permanent return to stability in the country.

Côte d'Ivoire also welcomes the commitment of Mr. Yoweri Museveni and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, mediator and facilitator, respectively, and expresses its appreciation for their efforts for peace and stability in Burundi. In that regard, my delegation supports the facilitator's proposal to prepare a consensus document for consideration by the mediator and Heads of State of the East African Community at the next summit of the organization, scheduled for 30 November in Kampala, including the recommendations of the Kayanza and Entebbe road maps, which were elaborated by the Government and the opposition.

The humanitarian question and human rights in Burundi are matters of concern to my delegation, despite the improvement in the security situation. Côte d'Ivoire calls on the Government of Burundi to shed light on the allegations of human rights violations in Burundi reported by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and by the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi of the Human Rights Council. To that end, we encourage Burundi to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Commission with a

view to implementing the recommendations made by it, and with a view to improving the human rights situation in the country and to resuming negotiations with the High Commissioner for Human Rights for the signature of the memorandum of understanding for cooperation with the institution.

My country also welcomes the authorizations granted on 9 November to 25 internatıcnal non-governmental organizations and urges them to speed up the accreditation process to facilitate the effective resumption of the voluntary repatriation programme for refugees. It also calls on the international community and donors to increase their contributions to the financing of the 2018 humanitarian response plan in Burundi so as to enable the improvement of humanitarian assistance to those in need.

In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire calls on the international community to continue to support the initiatives of the East African Community and of the mediator and the facilitator of the inter-Burundian political dialogue in the coming stages of the process leading to the preparation of credible and peaceful elections, scheduled for 2020. Côte d'Ivoire congratulates Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, for the work done in a difficult context and reiterates its support for all initiatives for peace and stability in Burundi.

Mr. Elé Ela (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Mr. Michel Kafando, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, for his excellent briefing on the situation in Burundi. We also thank the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Jürg Lauber.

We appreciate the efforts made by the Special Envoy, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1028), which reflects the hard work carried out by Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, and Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania, as mediator and facilitator of the dialogue process, respectively, between the Burundian parties. The updated report sheds light on and contextualizes the current situation of the country following the constitutional referendum on 17 May, which enjoyed widespread popular support. We take note of all the efforts undertaken by the actors involved in the ongoing political process for the general elections of 2020 and the appointment of the new members of the national independent electoral commission. We encourage the Government and all other stakeholders to continue encouraging dialogue so that the Burundians may shape their own destiny.

Equatorial Guinea subscribes to the efforts of the international community in the search for a peaceful solution to conflicts. For that reason, any action aimed at the consolidation of peace and the return to international legality through dialogue will have our support. That is why we continue to encourage and support the Government, political parties, civil society and national actors involved to continue strengthening dialogue for the peaceful development of political activities and for the preparation of the 2020 elections so as to ensure their credibility, transparency, inclusiveness and the full participation of women.

We believe that compliance with the principles of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement included in the new constitution, the recommendations of the negotiator and the inter-Burundian dialogue endorsed by the results of the constitutional referendum, should serve to address the political dialogue and serve as a guarantee for the satisfactory preparation of the elections in an atmosphere of peace, harmony and security that should continue to grow in solidity in the electoral and post-electoral process.

With regard to the security situation, we note the continued improvement and commend the progress observed after the signing of a tripartite agreement by Burundi, Tanzania and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which has enabled the voluntary return of refugees mainly from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. That demonstrates the commitment of the Government to continuing to work for the protection and promotion of human rights. In that regard, we encourage the Government to promote social cohesion and urge it to fight and take measures against impunity so that those responsible for crimes and serious violations of human rights and humanitarian law are held accountable before justice.

Equatorial Guinea has always believed in and supported the mediation efforts of all international, regional and subregional organizations, as well as the work of national political actors for a negotiated solution to the conflict and to channel the political process in Burundi, within democratic principles and values, which prioritize the country's sovereignty, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as essential elements of the Partnership Agreement

between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States, on the one hand, and the European Community and its member States, on the other, as well as the foundations set out in the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and the resolution of 4 November 2016 of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on the situation of human rights in the Republic of Burundi, in order to facilitate the protection of civilians, curb impunity and provide guarantees for the exercise of fundamental freedoms. In that regard, we urge all Burundian political actors to pursue their efforts to restore and strengthen the trust that will facilitate a national dialogue that is frank, inclusive and transparent.

Let me conclude by commending the President of Burundi's decision, announced on 7 June, not to run as a candidate in the 2020 elections, as well as the initiative taken by the Burundian Government to finance those elections. Those actions demonstrate their willingness to strengthen democracy and return peace, security and stability to the country and the region, as can also be seen in their contribution of troops to peacekeeping operations.

We take this opportunity to strongly urge the international community to continue resolutely supporting the Government and other parties that are directly involved in promoting confidence-building measures to guarantee an environment that is conducive to the peaceful holding of elections and to its commitment to the Constitution and the road map to the peaceful transfer of power in an atmosphere of peace and national accord.

Lastly, Equatorial Guinea welcomes the launching of Burundi's national development plan, which has the potential to offer new means of participation and, in view of the recommendations of the Special Envoy in the report on the socioeconomic situation in Burundi (S/2018/1028), we believe that a renewed effort to restore trust between the Government of Burundi, on the one hand, and the donor community and development partners, on the other, is crucial to the establishment of closer ties in the fight against poverty and ignorance, which provide a breeding ground for instability.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): We would like to thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Michel Kafando, and the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Switzerland, for their insightful briefings. I also welcome the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Ambassador Albert Shingiro, to the Chamber.

As a member observer of the African Union, we associate ourselves with the statements made by the African troika — Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire and Equatorial Guinea — whose representatives have already spoken before us today.

On the political front, we positively note the recent achievements in Burundi, notably the political forum held in Kayanza on 3 August and the appointment of the members of the Independent National Electoral Commission. The adoption of the 2018 Kayanza road map is a positive indicator of the constructive engagement of the Government and other political stakeholders. We hope that the signed road map will be followed by collective actions on the part of all Burundians.

We commend the decision of the His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of Burundi, not to run for another term in 2020, thereby helping to ease the political strain. That measure will certainly assist in sustaining peace, security and democracy in the country. We encourage the national authorities to continue their efforts to preserve the constitutional order in the country and build democratic institutions in the spirit and letter of the Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation.

We express concern over the slow progress in the inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue and urge all political actors to pursue it further, with meaningful engagement. That nationally owned process should be held in an environment of confidence and nationwide consensus, with the participation of all political stakeholders, in order to ensure durable peace. Constructive and inclusive political dialogue is the most important and only viable means for the peaceful resolution of the political situation in Burundi. It should be conducted in an environment of tolerance and restraint.

We further stress the importance of the committed efforts of the African Union and the East African Community in facilitating the political process in Burundi. We encourage regional and subregional organizations and the guarantors of the Arusha Agreement to redouble their efforts and contribute to a political solution, while respecting the sovereignty,

political independence, territorial integrity and unity of Burundi.

We commend the activities of the facilitator, His Excellency Mr. Benjamin William Mkapa, the third and former President of Tanzania, and the mediator, His Excellency Mr. Yoweri Museveni, President of Uganda, as well as the team of the joint technical working group in promoting confidence-building measures. We need to continue to encourage African-led and African-owned solutions to African problems. We also emphasize the importance of respecting the fundamental rights and freedoms of all citizens, and reaffirm the primary responsibility of the Burundian Government to provide security to and thereby protect its population.

At the same time, while the security situation is generally calm in Burundi, the issues of a large number of internally displaced persons, refugees and people in need of assistance must be addressed by the international community. They also need the attention of bilateral and multilateral partners and financial institutions. Such collective effort is needed for investments in development, which must be rigorously undertaken. There is no security without development and there is no development without security. We propose utilizing that nexus as one of the major three elements of the combined strategy to prevent and address conflicts in Africa and elsewhere, along with a revamped regional approach and the One United Nations principle.

We also commend the regional host countries for their assistance in the repatriation of refugees, which must be voluntary and in accordance with the principles of respect and dignity, as enshrined in international law and human rights law. Close coordination among the United Nations, the African Union and other subregional structures can, if effectively implemented, have a significant impact on political and humanitarian dimensions.

Finally, we note the committed efforts of the Government of Burundi to stabilizing the economic situation in the country, including the adoption of the national development plan. We need to assist the nation to overcome existing economic challenges. That platform may become the basis for confidence-building between Burundi and its partners. We also acknowledge the significant role of the Peacebuilding Commission's Burundi configuration and the United Nations system in addressing existing challenges in Burundi, for which the support of international partners is critical.

Mr. Almunayekh (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Michel Kafando, and the Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Jürg Lauber, for their valuable briefings, in which they informed us on recent developments in Burundi.

In my statement today, I shall focus on four issues.

First, on the political situation, the Republic of Burundi is experiencing outstanding political developments, including the constitutional referendum held on 17 May. The situation in the country is relatively calm and much improved from that of 2015. We hope that the state of calm will prevail in Burundi, leading to the holding of presidential elections in 2020, which we hope will include all categories of the Burundian people and enjoy the participation of all political parties. We also hope that the elections will be free, fair, transparent and credible and ensure the freedom of expression and the participation of actors from civil society, including young people and women along, with regional and international organizations.

In that regard, we commend the efforts of the African Union (AU) and the East African Community (EAC) to reach a peaceful solution to the political and security situations in the Republic of Burundi. That would be achieved through a comprehensive dialogue based on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi, signed on 28 August 2000, and the country's Constitution. We also highly appreciate the efforts led by the President of Uganda, Mr. Museveni, as facilitator and by Mr. Mkapa as mediator in the political dialogue.

Undoubtedly, the engagement of the Burundian Government with international and regional organizations, such as the United Nations, the AU, the European Union (EU) and the EAC, is significant and fraught with important implications that could lead to achieving the aspired stability. Such collaboration is considered to be one of the main factors in reaching a sustainable solution before the presidential elections in 2020. We are quite confident that the inter-Burundian dialogue will contribute significantly to facilitating the political process, while its positive effects will reflect on the security, economic and living conditions in the country.

Moreover, Government's reconciliation efforts, the promotion of tolerance among all Burundian parties

and the call for national reconciliation will have a positive impact that will undoubtedly contribute to the resolution of the political crisis in Burundi. That includes the release of certain political prisoners who were detained during the violent events in 2015.

Secondly, the security situation in the Republic of Burundi is improving, despite some continued violent acts perpetrated by armed groups. We hope that the security situation will continue to improve and that the Government will seize on the improved security situation to intensify national dialogue efforts and bring all political parties together, while ensuring the holding of the elections in 2020 in a secure and credible manner free of violence. We hope that the outcome of the EAC Heads of the State summit, to be held late this month, will contribute to strengthening the security situation, advancing the inter-Burundian dialogue and identifying a mechanism to facilitate national reconciliation, in collaboration with regional and international partners.

Thirdly, the humanitarian situation in the Republic of Burundi, despite having improved since 2017, including through the reduction of food insecurity, is still a cause of concern. Almost 1.7 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, while human rights violations continue to occur, accompanied by acts of killing and violence, in violation of the principles of human rights and international law. We call for an end to such acts and for the perpetrators to be held to account and brought to justice as soon as possible.

As for refugee situation following the signature of the tripartite agreement by Tanzania, Burundi and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, we commend the gradual, voluntary return of refugees and reiterate the need for the Government to step up its efforts to ensure the economic and social reintegration of those who have returned and the return of the remaining refugees to their homes and regions.

Fourthly, we underscore that socioeconomic development is a key factor for any Government that wants to develop and advance its society towards a bright and secure future. The adoption by the Government of Burundi on 22 August of the national development plan for the next 10 years is a step in the right direction towards genuine cooperation among factions of the Burundian community to the benefit of all. We therefore hope that the development plan will lead to significant progress in the Burundian economy and contribute to greater stability in the security and economic situations so that its positive effects will improve the standard of living of the Burundian people.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We appreciate the convening of this meeting and the important briefings delivered by Special Envoy of the Secretary-General Michel Kafando and Ambassador Jürg Lauber, in his capacity as Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, on his recent visit to the country.

Peru underscores the importance of the inter-Burundian dialogue, and hopes that the Government will reconsider its position that the dialogue has become obsolete under the new Constitution and subsequently decided not to participate in its latest meeting. We believe that an inclusive process of inclusive dialogue is indispensable to improving the political situation and building sustainable peace in Burundi.

In that regard, we stress the importance that the so-called 2018 Kayanza road map, on the organization of the 2020 general elections, include all political forces in the country in its drafting and implementation. We also consider it important to expedite the dialogue between the Government and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights so that the agency can resume its activities in Burundi, in a context of ongoing reports of human rights violations and abuses.

On the other hand, we acknowledge the Government's efforts to strengthen the economy of the country through the national development plan, with a view to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, thereby addressing the root causes of conflicts and reaching sustainable peace. We underline the importance of the international community's support for that plan, which seeks to promote development in Burundi's rural areas, taking into account governance, the sustainable management of the environment and planned land use. In that regard, we highlight the work of Ambassador Lauber and the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Finally, we believe that it is important for the Council to monitor developments in the country closely, and that regional organizations and neighbouring countries support them more closely in order to ensure an environment conducive to the holding of credible, transparent and inclusive elections in 2020.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): I thank our briefers, Special Envoy Kafando for his update and

Ambassador Lauber for updating us on his trip to Burundi and the region, and for so clearly setting out his recommendations. I would also like to welcome the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/1028), which provides a valuable record of factual information on the current situation in Burundi, and we look forward to discussing the set of options that the Secretary-General will present to the Council on the United Nations continuing role in Burundi.

The United Kingdom agrees with the Secretary-General and so many Council members here today that the East African Community (EAC)-led inter-Burundian dialogue, led by the region, is the only viable option to guarantee open and inclusive elections in 2020. We also recognize the importance of the African Union in supporting the EAC efforts in that regard. We commend the EAC for its engagement so far and the efforts of the EAC facilitator, former President Mkapa, and Special Envoy Kafando, despite the many challenges to progress. There is still a long way to go before inclusive, fair and credible elections can take place in 2020, and the credibility of those elections will be essential for the stability of Burundi. Citizens must have faith in their political process in order to accept its results.

For that reason, we share the disappointment of the representative of Peru and many other speakers here today that the Government of Burundi did not attend the fifth round of the inter-Burundian dialogue. Its participation is crucial to making that process a success. We therefore encourage the EAC to redouble its efforts to remain engaged and continue to push for a tangible inclusive dialogue. A harmonized road map that all parties can support and which preserves the gains of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement is crucial. We hope that discussions on how to achieve that will take place at the summit of the EAC Heads of State. We also call on the Government and its allied parties to continue to engage in dialogue with the region and, in doing so, send a clear signal of its continued commitment to resolving the ongoing political crisis.

We continue to be deeply concerned by reports of human rights violations, abuses and related crimes that have continued since our last briefing in August (S/PV.8325). The Special Envoy mentioned that issue during his own briefing. The recent suspension of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is of deep concern. Those NGOs support the most disadvantaged and vulnerable in Burundi, including refugees and those with infectious diseases. The humanitarian situation will inevitably deteriorate without those actors, and therefore we hope that the registration of the NGOs can continue without delay.

I would also like to agree with my Polish colleague when he spoke about the centrality of human rights issues to the work of the Council. We heard earlier this year from Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, that human rights violations and abuses can often be the canary in the coal mine when it comes to predicting a conflict; therefore, it is very important that, as a Council, we remain seized of these issues. I also note that many speakers have noted the role that the Human Rights Council has to play on Burundi. I would therefore urge the Government of Burundi to cooperate fully with the Human Rights Council's mechanisms, including the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

It is clear from the Secretary-General's report — and from wider discussion here today — that Burundi should remain on the Council's agenda. Although the security situation may have improved, armed attacks continue, and we have deep concerns about the political crisis and the humanitarian and human rights situation. As we have seen many times before, those are often the root causes of conflict and must be addressed by the Council.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I wish to thank Special Envoy Kafando and Ambassador Lauber for their briefings. We deeply appreciate the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Burundi dated 15 November (S/2018/1028), submitted pursuant to resolution 2303 (2016). We look forward to the next written report.

The United States is disappointed, as are so many others, that the Government of Burundi did not participate in the fifth round of the East African Community (EAC) inter-Burundi dialogue in October. Among the reasons cited for its absence, the Government said that it was unable to attend due to a period of national mourning to remember fallen national heroes: Prince Rwagasore and President Ndadaye. For our part, we can think of no better way to honour their memory than by seeking to bridge Burundi's political divides and putting the country on the path to peace and sustainable development. In their own way and in their own time, both of those men attempted to promote

mutual understanding, leading to independence, peace and development and inspiring millions of Burundians, giving us all hope for Burundi's future.

We welcome the efforts of the EAC dialogue facilitator and former President, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa, to seek consensus on a road map to elections in 2020. We encourage the Government of Burundi and the opposition parties to renew their commitment to the dialogue in order to reach consensus on such a road map. In the aftermath of the fifth round of the dialogue, we also encourage leaders in the region to send a clear signal of their continued engagement and support for peaceful, free, fair and credible elections in 2020.

The situation in Burundi has undermined the significant gains achieved through the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. We encourage the Arusha guarantors to reinvigorate their diplomatic engagement in support of the Agreement. Additionally, we take note of the Secretary-General's report reference to the fact that the United Nations continues to receive allegations of human rights violations and abuses. We are particularly disturbed that more than 45 bodies were discovered throughout the country in the wake of various attacks, murders and disappearances. We also remain deeply concerned about restrictions on civic and political space in Burundi, especially in the media and through the use of harsh prison sentences to intimidate human rights defenders. We are worried by reports of the increasing role of the ruling party's youth wing, the Imbonerakure, in committing human rights abuses.

We are deeply concerned by alleged cross-border attacks by individuals or groups operating between Burundi and Rwanda. That situation remains volatile and requires the Council's attention in the lead-up to elections. We also remain concerned by constitutional provisions adopted this year that imposed restrictions on the opposition, and we call on the Government of Burundi to respect the rights of opposition members. At the same time, we encourage opposition political actors to commit to non-violent participation in the 2020 elections. With that in mind, we once again renew our call for the Government of Burundi to resume cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The Government of Burundi's decision to ban three members of the United Nations commission of inquiry from accessing the country by deeming them persona non grata represents another example of a prolonged unwillingness to cooperate with the United Nations on human rights issues, despite the extension of the commission's mandate by one year.

The United States also remains deeply concerned by the Government of Burundi's suspension of all international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). That decision has adversely affected long-standing initiatives that aim to improve conditions for the Burundian people, including programmes to prevent and treat malaria, HIV/AIDS and malnutrition. We recognize that more than 30 NGOs have had their suspensions lifted. We urge the Burundian Government to lift all remaining suspensions to ensure the continuation of vital services to the Burundian people.

There is significant will in the Council to work with the Government of Burundi and the region to address old wounds and to build a brighter future. The elections represent a clear opportunity for Burundi's leaders to reset their relationship with the international community by engaging in good faith in a political process that includes all Burundians. We hope that they will seize it.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): I would like to join others in welcoming Ambassador Lauber and Special Envoy Kafando back to the Security Council today, as well as thanking them for their useful briefings. They both have our strong support in their important endeavours. We also appreciate the solid and comprehensive update in the written report by the Secretary-General (S/2018/1028). Let me also recognize the presence of the Permanent Representative of Burundi, Ambassador Shingiro.

Since the crisis in 2015, the situation in Burundi has improved and is now — as was stated by the Special Envoy — relatively calm. However, reports of human rights violations and abuses, acts of violence and intimidation and restrictions of the democratic space continue. The humanitarian and socioeconomic situation is dire and deteriorating. Mistrust and divisions continue to run deep in Burundian society, but also with neighbours and international partners.

It was therefore deeply disappointing to learn that, since our previous meeting (see S/PV.8325), the Government did not participate in the fifth session of the inter-Burundian dialogue in Arusha. The Government has chosen to embark upon confrontation with United Nations human rights mechanisms rather than engage in dialogue. In addition, there are still no memorandums of understanding in place for African Union (AU) observers

or for resumed cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was also disappointing to learn that the activities of international non-governmental organizations were suddenly — albeit temporarily — suspended. That trajectory of confrontation must change if we are to avoid a repetition of the crisis in 2015. Restoring confidence and trust is urgent and critical, including in preparations for peaceful and credible elections in 2020.

As has been stated by others today, an inclusive political dialogue among all stakeholders remains the only way towards peace and stability in Burundi. Trust-building measures among all parties remain absolutely key. In that regard, it is important to continue to build on the progress made within the framework of the inter-Burundian dialogue, including by ensuring that women are represented in the dialogue. The achievements of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement have laid the foundations for peace, security and stability in Burundi and in the broader Great Lakes region. They must be safeguarded.

In that regard, continued regional efforts are critical. We commend the East African Community (EAC) mediator, President Museveni, and the facilitator of the inter-Burundian dialogue, former President Mkapa, for their tireless efforts. We now look forward to President Mkapa's recommendations on the way forward, including the envisaged joint road map for elections. We strongly believe that the EAC-led mediation efforts must continue, and we look forward to the outcome of the EAC summit at the end of this month. The AU also has an important role to play, including by supporting the EAC, and we welcome the recent visit by the AU to Bujumbura. We reiterate the need for the memorandum of understanding to be signed so that the AU observers can work effectively and meet their objectives.

Continued international attention, support and engagement is key. The launch of the national development plan anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals is welcomed and provides an opportunity for engagement, as well as for socioeconomic dialogue. In that regard, the efforts of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, under the stewardship of Ambassador Lauber, should be actively supported. The PBC offers a unique platform for engagement and can help contribute to a common understanding of the political and socioeconomic situation, as well as the most urgent peacebuilding needs.

An international presence and support in Burundi is important, including in order to contribute to building trust. The United Nations country team continues to be an important partner. The process of completing the United Nations Development assistance framework is therefore important. We call on the Government to cooperate with all United Nations human rights mechanisms. The presence of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to carry out objective human rights monitoring and capacity-building will be key, and we hope that the memorandum of understanding can be swiftly concluded. It is also important to continue the process of allowing international non-governmental organizations to return and continue their important humanitarian work.

As the Secretary-General concludes in his report, the situation in Burundi remains fragile. That has implications as well for peace and security in the broader region. It is therefore important that the Security Council remain constructively engaged. The Council's continued support for regional efforts is crucial. We must together continue to encourage and facilitate genuine and inclusive national dialogue, ensure respect for human rights and an end to violence and promote the opening of political space. Only through progress on all those fronts can peaceful and credible elections in 2020 be held, and longer-term stability, peace and prosperity be achieved.

I would like to direct my concluding remarks to Ambassador Shingiro. The doors for constructive partnership with the region and with the broader international community to assist in Burundi's national efforts are open. The East African Community, the African Union, the United Nations, including the Peacebuilding Commission, and the European Union all offer opportunities for constructive international engagement. Moving forward, international support will be needed to build trust and overcome the deep divisions. We therefore strongly encourage Burundi to make use of all that goodwill and begin a new era of cooperation.

The President: (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

China thanks the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Burundi, Mr. Kafando, and Ambassador Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their briefings.

The current situation in Burundi is generally calm. The Government of Burundi has been actively promoting the political process to implement the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and maintaining domestic peace and stability. Important progress has been made. A large number of refugees have returned to their homeland. Over 20 Burundian political parties have jointly formulated a road map for the elections to be held in 2020, while the Independent National Electoral Commission has been established in accordance with the new Constitution. The momentum for national reconciliation, social cohesion and political inclusion is becoming ever stronger.

China welcomes those achievements, which fully demonstrate that the Government and the people of Burundi have the full capacity and resolve to independently settle internal political problems and maintain their country's peace and stability. The international community should fully respect Burundi's ownership and leadership in handling its own affairs and effectively respect the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Burundi. In particular, with regard to issues relating to the elections and the political process, the international community should fully respect the choice of the Government and the people of Burundi.

China welcomes the efforts of regional and subregional organizations — including the African Union, the East African Community, and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region — in providing mediation in the Burundian political process. We hope that all the relevant regional actors will continue to enhance their communication and consultation with the Burundian Government and provide constructive assistance.

China notes that, during the General Assembly's general debate this year, the Foreign Minister of Burundi stated that the current political and security situation in the country was completely calm, stable and under control and that, as such, it had long ceased to be a threat to international or regional peace and security (see A/73/PV.14). He also expressed his view that Burundi should be removed from the agenda of the Security Council. The Security Council should heed the voice of Burundi, view the country's situation in a comprehensive, just and objective manner and make the necessary adjustments in a timely fashion and according to the evolution of situation on the ground, so as to send a positive message.

At the same time, due to the suspension of cooperation and assistance by some countries and organizations, Burundi is faced with challenges in terms of socioeconomic development and the humanitarian situation. Development is the guarantee of peace. As Ambassador Lauber pointed out, peace, stability and progress in the political process in Burundi cannot be achieved without socioeconomic development. The international community should continue to provide support and assistance to Burundi according to the country's needs. We call on the relevant international organizations and agencies to reinstate their economic cooperation and development assistance to Burundi as soon as possible.

China welcomes the formulation of a 10-year national development by the Burundian government, a plan that not only shows the blueprint for the country in the years to come but also provides guidance with regard to international assistance to Burundi. We hope that the international community and Burundi's international partners will honour their commitments with timely actions, tailor their assistance to Burundi's development plan and prioritize support to areas such as agriculture, infrastructure, education and environmental protection.

The Special Envoy of the Secretary-General and the Peacebuilding Commission are important bridges between Burundi and the international community. We hope that they will continue to leverage their respective advantages and enhance their communication and consultation with the Government of Burundi. As always, they can count on China's support going forward.

The Chinese Government has all along been supportive of Burundi's peace process and has provided assistance to the national reconstruction of Burundi within the scope of our capacity. In fulfilment of our commitment made during the Beijing Summit of the Forum on China Africa Cooperation, China recently provided ¥300 million in free assistance, as well as ¥50 million in humanitarian food assistance, to the Burundian Government. China stands ready to continue to play a constructive role in achieving peace, stability and sustainable development in Burundi.

I resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Shingiro (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): As this is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, Mr. President, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of November.

My delegation would also like to thank all the members of the Council that have never ceased to uphold respect for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations in addressing the situation in Burundi here in the Council. We are very grateful for that. We regret the fact that, for three years now, certain delegations remain unwilling to acknowledge the progress we have made. We hope that their stance will change in line with the pace of the situation on the ground.

I would also like to thank my colleague Ambassador Jürg Lauber, Chair of the Burundi configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his constructive contribution at this meeting, and we renew our full cooperation with him. I cannot help but thank the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General, Mr. Michel Kafando, for his briefing and for the Secretary-General's report (S/2018/1028), even though I do not agree with all of its content — indeed, there is a wide gap between what the report describes and the real situation on the ground in Burundi.

The purpose of my briefing is to share with the members of the Council the new developments since the previous meeting on the situation in Burundi, held on 9 August (see S/PV.8325).

At the political level, preparations for the 2020 elections are continuing normally and in a relaxed and peaceful atmosphere. The Kayanza road map for peaceful elections in 2020 and the Independent National Electoral Commission are already in place. As far as financing is concerned, Burundians themselves are mobilizing the necessary resources to finance that major electoral event. The fact that the financing for the 2020 elections is virtually complete serves to highlight the will of the Burundian people to take full ownership of the electoral process — their own electoral process.

As for the creation of an environment conducive to the successful holding of the 2020 elections, everything will be done to guarantee that the elections are democratic, credible, inclusive and peaceful, which will in turn ensure the political and economic stability of our country. Since the beginning of 2018, the Government of Burundi has made a number of concrete gestures of goodwill towards the general easing of tensions in the country. The announcement by the Head of State to not stand for re-election in 2020 — even though he has the right to do so — is a commendable gesture of high political and democratic value. The release at the beginning of the year of more than 2,000 prisoners, including the insurgents of 2015, is also part of the ongoing momentum of reconciliation, social cohesion and political tolerance in the country. Both a moral virtue and a political principle, tolerance is also a conduit for peace that we must foster, maintain, strengthen and perpetuate in Burundi.

With regard to the inter-Burundian dialogue towards democratic, transparent, inclusive and peaceful elections in 2020, my delegation would like to recall that using dialogue as a tool for achieving consensus-based solutions to problems is a culture that is woven into the daily lives of Burundians. Last month, facilitator Benjamin William Mkapa concluded the last round of the East African Community-led inter-Burundian dialogue, which took place in Arusha. We are very grateful to him for the efforts he made for the past nearly three years to support Burundi in its peace- and democracy-building process. I would like to take this opportunity to remind the Council, for all intents and purposes, that the key mandate of the Special Envoy was to support the dialogue process, which was just concluded on 29 October.

Our projections indicate that, by and large, the year 2019 will focus on planning for the 2020 elections and on implementing Burundi's national development plan. In the spirit of national ownership, which is the guiding principle of peacebuilding, political consultations towards the holding of free, transparent and inclusive elections in 2020 will continue in Burundi in an open and constructive manner that gives a voice to all of the stakeholders involved. In that regard, Burundi encourages the political actors still in exile who were not involved in the failed coup of 13 May 2015 to return to participate in the 2020 elections and contribute to the ongoing efforts towards socioeconomic development in the country. There is no doubt whatsoever that the successful outcome of the 2020 electoral process will mark a new and glorious chapter in the history of our country and turn the dark page on 2015 once and for all.

On the security front, as the Council is aware, the situation in Burundi is calm, stable and fully under control. That is the truth — I am not spreading

propaganda. By and large, all the subregional and regional organizations whose high-level delegations recently visited Burundi to inquire about the real situation in the country found that things had returned to normal. The 2015 crisis is over. It is behind us, even though there are challenges with regard to socioeconomic development that still need to be addressed. Some partners that are still hesitant should have the courage to accept the return to normal, turn the page on 2015 and look to the country's future from a vision- and approach-based perspective.

With regard to the freedom of expression, my delegation would like to inform the Council that Burundi has a very rich tradition of freedom of expression and a very active civil society. That is reflected by the more than 20 local public and private radio stations, five community radio stations, 10 radio-television broadcasters, 17 local news and communication agencies, 24 public and private newspapers, 26 websites, eight web television channels, four magazines and 12 professional press associations and bodies that operate in our country. In addition to our local private radio stations, four foreign radio stations are also authorized to broadcast freely in our country. Even the number of people employed in the media sector increased to 122 in 2018, as compared to 94 in 2015, for a substantial increase of 28 media sector workers in three years. To the delegations that were asking questions concerning the freedom of expression, we hope that this paragraph gave them their answers.

With regard to civil society, the Government has already approved more than 6,500 non-profit organizations, more than 100 of which have been approved since January 2016 alone. I would also remind the Council that 15 non-profit organizations that had been under investigation since the failed coup d'état of 13 May 2015 were allowed to reopen. The approval in accordance with national law of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) is continuing at a reasonable pace. Thirty-eight NGOs have already been approved and are operating as I speak. Several other foreign NGOs that have seen their agendas grow significantly are expected to resume their activities shortly.

As for the return of refugees, since 2016 about 250,000 refugees have returned home. That figure includes the 55,495 refugees who have returned to the country since the August 2017 Burundi-Tanzania-Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) tripartite agreement. The voluntary return of refugees, who are coming home mainly from Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, is at a pace of more than 1,000 people returning per week. Nevertheless, my delegation would also like to reiterate its legitimate request to UNHCR and Burundi's friends in the region to intervene in certain host countries — we all know very well which ones they are — that are holding hostage our fellow compatriots in exile by creating artificial barriers to prevent their voluntary return home; and, above all to ensure that refugee camps maintain their civilian character in accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. UNHCR must ensure that refugee camps are not forcibly transformed into military or paramilitary training camps.

With regard to protecting human rights, the Government of Burundi attaches great importance to human rights issues. We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy with regard to human rights violations and we are currently working to implement it. We adhere with conviction to the principles of objectivity, universality, non-selectivity and the non-politicization of human rights. We recognize that isolated cases of human rights violations can occur, just as they can in other countries. For those reasons, in addition to its independent national commission on human rights, the Government has set up judicial commissions of inquiry to shed light on certain human rights violations alleged to have occurred since the beginning of the insurgency in 2015.

Nevertheless, the Council will agree with me that promoting human rights is a long and arduous process that is sometimes fraught with difficulties. It is an ideal that we all strive to achieve. No nation has perfected it, even after more than a century of democracy. For Burundi, a democracy that is barely 13 years old, there is still a long way to go, but the willingness to succeed is there and it is tangible. The Independent National Human Rights Commission is operational and contributes enormously to improving the human rights situation in our country.

With regard to the socioeconomic situation, the Government of Burundi has just adopted a national development plan for 2018-2027. The national plan is a reference document that sets out the main directions to lead us towards the sustainable development that we wish to see by the year 2030. In view of the challenges presented by that new development plan, the Government of Burundi launches a fervent appeal to all bilateral and multilateral partners to support our

country in implementing the national development plan in a spirit of mutually beneficial and, above all, respectful cooperation.

With respect to cooperation on the three pillars of United Nations work, the human rights pillar remains the weak element in the good cooperation. Burundi believes that the discordant and tense relations between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva and Burundi are counterproductive for both parties. Disproportionate pressure based on politically biased reports has never contributed to the promotion of human rights anywhere in the world. For us, dialogue and mutually respectful cooperation are the only appropriate way to find solutions to issues that require coordinated responses between Geneva and Bujumbura. It is a two-way road, where each user must strive to avoid head-on collisions by respecting, of course, the code of conduct, which in this particular case is the Charter of the United Nations.

Concerning the development pillar, Burundi appreciates the work of the United Nations country team, which continues to support the country in its socioeconomic development efforts. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework for the period from 2019 to 2023 was developed and adopted by mutual agreement of the Government and the United Nations country team in Bujumbura. Today, the UNDAF is now the main tool for strategic integration and for the United Nations response to our national priorities. That United Nations presence to address development is very useful to Burundi. However, any presence of a political nature is inappropriate. Determining the political future of Burundi is exclusively a national matter.

With regard to the peace and security pillar, Burundi is proud to actively and successfully participate alongside other countries in United Nations and African Union peacekeeping missions. More than 6,000 Burundian men and women are deployed in various peacekeeping operations, mainly in the Central African Republic and Somalia. The excellent work of our brave soldiers in peace missions, who have willingly chosen to sacrifice their lives to save those of others far from their native land and in particularly hostile conditions, must be duly appreciated.

I cannot conclude my remarks without once again reiterating our appeal to the Security Council to have the courage to remove Burundi from its agenda. The current political and security situation in the country is calm and stable. It is far from posing a threat to international peace and security, which is the Council's area of competence. To justify keeping Burundi on the Council's agenda because of the holding of elections in 2020 would mean including on the agenda more than 20 other countries that will have elections in the same year as Burundi. The elections therefore are not grounds to justify the Council remaining seized of the situation in Burundi.

The convening of inappropriate meetings on Burundi on the basis of an obsolete resolution that no longer fits the reality on the ground could become a destabilizing factor for the country. Most Member States, some of which are members of the Council, disregard the real reasons behind the disproportionate hounding of Burundi, a country whose return to normalcy is well established. History will remember that my country was kept on the Council's agenda unfairly in order to satisfy foreign interests. As I clearly said on 9 August in the Chamber (see S/PV.8325), the valuable time that the Security Council generously devotes to Burundi should be allocated to other areas of tension and conflict, which are rife in other countries.

The meeting rose at 5.05 p.m.